



Habitats

Interior rivers and streams; natural lakes and prairie marshes; constructed lakes, ponds, and reservoirs

Iowa Status

common; native

Iowa Range

statewide except the southwest corner

Bibliography

Iowa Department of Natural Resources. 2001.
Biodiversity of Iowa: Aquatic Habitats CD-ROM.

Johnny darter

Etheostoma nigrum

Kingdom:	Animalia
Division/Phylum:	Chordata - vertebrates
Class:	Osteichthyes
Order:	Perciformes
Family:	Percidae

Features

The Johnny darter attains a maximum length of about 2 1/2 inches. The "X" and "W" marks along the sides of the body are characteristic. Two dorsal fins are present, the first with spines and a black spot. The anal fin has one spine. The body is olive on the back and upper sides. Brown bars are present along the sides. A black teardrop-shaped mark is present under each eye. The breeding male has a black head and black anal and pelvic fins.

Natural History

The Johnny darter lives near the bottom of creeks, rivers, and lakes. It eats crustaceans and insects. It spawns in May. The female deposits as many as 1,100 eggs under rocks or other objects lying on the bottom. The eggs are laid and fertilized while the fish is upside down. The male guards the eggs.